



State Senator **NANCY CASSIS**

E-NEWS UPDATE

Making Schools Safer

The Senate has given final approval to legislation I sponsored that enhances the safety of children by keeping felons and dangerous individuals away from schools. It is now on the governor's desk awaiting her signature.

As a former educator and vice chair of the Senate Education Committee, I believe we need to do everything possible to give parents peace of mind and keep sex offenders away from our children. This legislation is a common-sense reform and I'm optimistic that the governor will sign it.

Senate Bill 616 is a key provision of the Student Safety Initiative. The multi-bill package prohibits sex offenders from residing, loitering or working within 1,000 feet of a school. It also revokes teaching certifications for convicted sex offenders and requires background checks on all paid school and day-care center employees. Anyone with a sex offense is prohibited from being employed in a school or day-care center.

My portion sets sentencing guidelines. The first violation is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for up to one year and/or a maximum fine of \$1,000. Second and subsequent offenses are felonies punishable by imprisonment for up to two years and/or a maximum fine of \$2,000.

The bill also establishes additional penalties for sex offenders failing to update their entry on the online registry.

Improving Special Education

Another one of my bills also is waiting for the governor's final approval. Senate Bill 83 will bring Michigan into compliance with federal standards for special education students.

The Special Education Advisory Committee is charged with advising the state on educating children with disabilities. This act brings the panel into compliance with the newly adopted federal guidelines, changing it from 27 members to 33.

The governing directive responsible for the increase is the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

As a result of the change, the Michigan Association of School Psychologists, Michigan Association of School Social Workers, Michigan Association of Teachers of Emotionally Disturbed Children and the Michigan Association of Learning Disabilities Educators will each have a voting seat on the panel.

Happy Driving

The end is finally in sight on the I-96/Beck Road interchange construction. The ramp will begin opening to traffic and as it does, the 12 Mile entrance to the eastbound freeway will close. We look forward to the grand opening ribbon-cutting.

Contact Information:

The E-News Update by Senator Nancy Cassis is designed to provide residents and organizations with a periodic update of my activity in Lansing. If you have any questions or do not wish to receive this e-mail, please contact my office.

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